

## Board Members

Dennis Iott  
President  
Kalkaska, MI

Jason Walther  
Vice-President  
Three Rivers, MI

Norman Crooks  
Stanton, MI

Don Sklarczyk  
Johannesburg, MI

Alan Sackett  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Mecosta, MI

Larry Young  
Howard City, MI

Randy Styma  
Posen, MI



February 9, 2009

Honorable Senator Gerald Van Woerkom  
Chairman of the Senate Ag and Bioeconomy Committee  
PO Box 30036  
Lansing MI 48909

Dear Senator Van Woerkom:

RE: SB 134

Potato Growers of Michigan supports SB 134 to amend PA 322 entitled "Julian-Stille value-added act".

The Michigan Potato Industry Commission is a recipient of a Julian-Stille grant. The funds were used to construct a research and demonstration storage for the purpose of demonstrating techniques to reduce potato losses in storage to post harvest potato diseases.

Michigan potatoes are harvested in the fall and stored for shipment throughout the following months. Michigan has typically been known as a mid season shipping state. However through new storage technology and a significant investment by farmers, Michigan's potato storage season has been extended to late spring and early summer.

Extended season storage technology has opened new markets but at the same time added new risks of post harvest disease developing in storages. The new post harvest research and demonstration building uses new storage techniques to demonstrate how to extend the storage season and at the same time reduce the incident of disease on potatoes while in storage.

This Julian-Stille grant project will help retain and open potato markets for Michigan growers. The Michigan Potato Industry represents a \$123,480,000 farm gate value. Expanding markets and improving quality has been the cornerstone of activities of the Michigan Potato Industry Commission.

Potato Growers of Michigan appreciates the support of the state legislature by creating the Julian-Stille value added act. We believe the project described above is a good example of the Julian-Stille value added public funds put to good use to aid agriculture in our state. We encourage members of the Senate Agriculture and Bioeconomy Committee to support SB 134.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Kudwa".

Ben Kudwa, Legislative Director